

Message Text

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16

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 SAB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 OMB-01 AF-10

ACDA-19 DRC-01 /162 W

----- 037281

R 251503Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1650

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USINT CAIRO

USINT DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 1102

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, XF, US

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN COVER FOR SYRIAN-ISRAELI TALKS

REF: CAIRO 0880 (NOTAL)

1. IF FEB 23 AHRAH DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL THAT SYRIAN-ISRAELI EXCHANGES ON DISENGAGEMENT TAKE PLACE THROUGH MEDIUM OF RECONVENED EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI MILITARY TALKS IN GENEVA (REFTEL) REFLECTS WHAT EGYPTIANS AND SYRIANS WANT, ISRAELIS MAY NOT BE AS NEGATIVELY DISPOSED AS IT MIGHT SEEM.

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2. IN LENGTHLY INFORMAL EXPOSITION ON TRENDS IN ARAB WORLD, MID EAST DIRECTOR VERED OF MFA TOLD US RECENTLY THAT SHE BELIEVED SYRIANS WANTED AND NEEDED EGYPTIAN COVER IN ORDER TO START NEGOTIATIONS ON DISENGAGEMENT. SHE SAID THAT WHILE ASAD WAS NOT SO WEAK THAT HIS REGIME WAS IN DANGER, HE WAS UNDER PRESSURES FROM MANY SYRIAN QUARTERS NOT TO TAKE A FIRST FATEFUL STEP TOWARD SETTLEMENT WITH ISRAEL (TEL AVIV 0970). HE APPEARED TO BE TRYING TO LINE UP SUPPORT SLOWLY BUT SYSTEMATICALLY WITH ONE SYRIAN GROUPING AFTER ANOTHER, INCLUDING ELEMENTS WHICH OSTENSIBLY WOULD NOT CHALLENGE HIM DIRECTLY, IN ORDER TO GAIN SOME FREEDOM OF ACTION. MRS VERED SAID THAT BECAUSE OF ASAD'S EFFORTS TO BUILD BROAD CONSENSUS WITHIN SYRIA FOR SHARING WITH HIM RESPONSIBILITY FOR DECISION HE MIGHT TAKE TO RISK EXPLORING POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, HER INSTINCTS TOLD HER HE WOULD ACT THE SAME WAY EXTERNALLY AS WELL. SHE THEREFORE FELT HE WOULD WANT TO BE IN POSITION TO PORTRAY ANY SYRIAN ENTRY INTO EXCHANGES WITH ISRAEL AS LARGELY AN EGYPTIAN MOVE, OR AS JOINT EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI MOVE, AND HE WOULD WANT EGYPTIAN ROLE TO HAVE GREATER VISIBILITY IN ARAB WORLD THAN ANY US OR US-SOVIET ROLE.

3. IN MRS VERED'S PERSONAL OPINION, SUCH EGYPTIAN COVER SHOULD MAKE LITTLE DIFFERENCE FOR ISRAEL AS LONG AS DISENGAGEMENT TERMS TO BE WORKED OUT WERE ACCEPTABLE. ISRAEL WOULD ALSO WANT SOME DIRECT CONTACT WITH SYRIAN REPS TOWARD END OF PROCESS, SHE SAID, IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT DAMASCUS UNDERSTOOD ISRAEL WOULD HOLD SYRIA AND NO ONE ELSE ACCOUNTABLE FOR FAITHFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF DISENGAGEMENT PLAN. SHE THOUGHT SUCH CONTACT COULD HAPPEN IN VARIOUS WAYS, AS SYRIA AND EGYPT REMAINED UNDER JOINT MILITARY COMMAND AND THERE WAS SYRIAN MILITARY LIAISON MISSION STILL ATTACHED TO EGYPTIAN GENERAL HQAM SYRIAN COLONEL, FOR EXAMPLE, COULD BE ATTACHED TO EGYPTIAN MILITARY PARTY DURING FREQUENT INFORMAL TALKS STILL GOING ON BETWEEN EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI COMMANDERS IN SUEZ CANAL AREA.

4. COMMENT: MRS VERED OF COURSE IS NOT ONE OF GOI'S SCENARIO WRITERS FOR NEGOTIATING ARRANGEMENTS WITH NEIGHBORING STATES. HOWEVER, SHE IS WELL RESPECTED AUTHORITY IN GOI ON ARAB ATTITUDES. IT THEREFORE SEEMS PROBABLE THAT HER VIEWS HAVE BEEN SOUGHT AND WEIGHED WITHIN GOI AS TO WHAT MODALITIES WOULD OR WOULD
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NOT WORK WITH SYRIA FOR PURPOSES OF WORKING OUT DISENGAGEMENT.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
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30 JUN 2005

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